School of Graduate Studies in the Health Sciences

DOCUMENT TYPE: Policy

REVIEW PERIOD: annual

TITLE: Degrees and Commencement Policy

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for the awarding of degrees within the School of Graduate Studies in the Health Sciences.

POLICY: Degrees earned in a graduate program in the School of Graduate Studies in the Health Sciences are awarded at the end of each semester. A student must complete all degree requirements as outlined below and an Application for Diploma through the MyU student portal. The form should be completed by the dates designated in the academic calendar.

Master of Science (MS) Degree

- Course Work: A minimum of 30 credit hours and a minimum GPA of ≥2.8 (on a 4 point scale) or a weighted numerical average of 75%, are required.

- Thesis of Capstone Project: Some programs may require a thesis or capstone project as a requirement for graduation. The thesis or capstone project should show evidence of original investigation. The thesis or capstone project must be approved by the student’s advisory committee and the Dean of the Graduate School prior to graduation.

Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) Degree

- Course Work: A doctorate degree requires a minimum of 60 credit hours beyond a baccalaureate degree (or 30 credit hours beyond a master’s degree) and a minimum GPA of ≥3.0 (on a 4.0 point scale) are required.

- All PhD students must enroll in and pass ID 709 (Responsible Conduct of Research/Research Ethics) and ID 714 (Professional Skills for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows). However, PHN students may take ID 700 (Ethics in Research) in place of ID 709 and are exempt from the ID 714 requirement.

- Qualifying Examination and Admission to Candidacy: All students enrolled in a PhD program within the SGSHS must successfully pass a qualifying examination to be admitted into candidacy for the PhD degree. Two weeks after satisfactory completion of the qualifying examination and any additional prerequisites, the student must submit an application for admission to candidacy form to the SGSHS Office of the Dean.

- Dissertation: A written dissertation and oral defense are mandatory in all PhD programs and may be prepared in either traditional or manuscript styles. The dissertation must show originality of thought and demonstrate the results of independent investigation. It should contribute to the advancement of knowledge, exhibit mastery of the subject literature, and be written with an acceptable degree of literary skill.

- Dissertation Defense: The dissertation defense is conducted by the candidate’s advisory committee and consists of a public presentation and defense of the dissertation in accordance with the SGHS notice of public defense policy. In private deliberation, the
advisory committee will determine the acceptability of the defense and dissertation. Further questioning of the candidate may be included in the committee’s deliberations. The dissertation must be submitted to the advisory committee at least 10 days before the examination. Five members of the advisory committee must be present at the final oral examination at which time they will sign the dissertation defense approval form. Upon successful completion of the oral defense and following approval of the written dissertation, the student must submit the following to the SGSHS Office of the Dean within two weeks.

- Publication Requirement: All PhD students are required to have the results of their research accepted for publication prior to awarding of degree. The student must be listed as the sole first author on at least one publication in a national or international, peer-reviewed journal. In rare cases, exceptions may be allowed. Any requested exceptions must be approved by the advisory committee, program director, and the dean of the SGSHS. Verification of the publication requirement requires submission of the signed publication requirement form to the SGSHS Office of the Dean.

Post-baccalaureate certificate program:

- Course Work: A program requires a minimum of 11 credit hours beyond a baccalaureate degree and a minimum GPA of ≥3.0 (on a 4.0 point scale) are required.

SCOPE: All SGSHS students.